

Staff Report

Chief Administrator's Office



www.kitchener.ca

REPORT TO: Special Council

DATE OF MEETING: February 27, 2023

SUBMITTED BY: Dan Chapman, CAO, 519-741-2200 ext. 7350

PREPARED BY: Kathryn Dever, Director, Strategy and Corporate Performance, 519-741-2200 ext. 7370

WARD(S) INVOLVED: All Ward(s)

DATE OF REPORT: February 21, 2023

REPORT NO.: CAO-2023-088

SUBJECT: 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Development – Prioritizing Strategic Goal Areas

RECOMMENDATION:
For discussion.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council a progress update on work underway to define the City's next Strategic Plan for 2023-2026, with a focus on engaging Council in a discussion to establish a set of strategic goal areas for the Strategic Plan.
- Staff continue to work with Compass Kitchener to implement meaningful, inclusive and enhanced community engagement to inform the Strategic Plan, with the Resident Panel actively underway.
- This report supports the creation of a new Strategic Plan with key goals and actions for the next 4-year timeframe, and goes further as the work includes developing a new 20-year vision for the City of Kitchener to proactively plan for the future.
- There are no financial implications associated with this staff report.

BACKGROUND:

The City's Strategic Plan sets priorities and a plan for action that guides progress over the four-year term of Council towards our long-term community vision. The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan yielded tangible achievements and results, informing the annual Business Plan and decision-making on capital and operating budget investments. The Strategic Plan represents a commitment to the public to move forward on those things that are most important to them. The new term of Council represents an opportunity to set a new four-year agenda that builds on the progress made, while planning for the future to take advantage of

*** This information is available in accessible formats upon request. ***
Please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

new opportunities to better serve the community and respond to emerging issues, trends and shifts in citizen priorities.

These discussions have deliberately spanned the previous and new terms of Council, to access both the depth of knowledge gained over the previous term, and connect with Council following the municipal campaign and election. **At the February 27 Council strategic session staff will engage in a discussion around Council’s priorities for key goal areas to be included in the Strategic Plan.** The goal areas established by Council will be used by staff to identify indicators of success, and potential actions in which the City could make progress over the life of the Strategic Plan, for discussion at a future Council session.

REPORT:

Strategic Plan Workplan Progress

The workplan to define the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan has six stages as shown below; we are currently in stage 4:



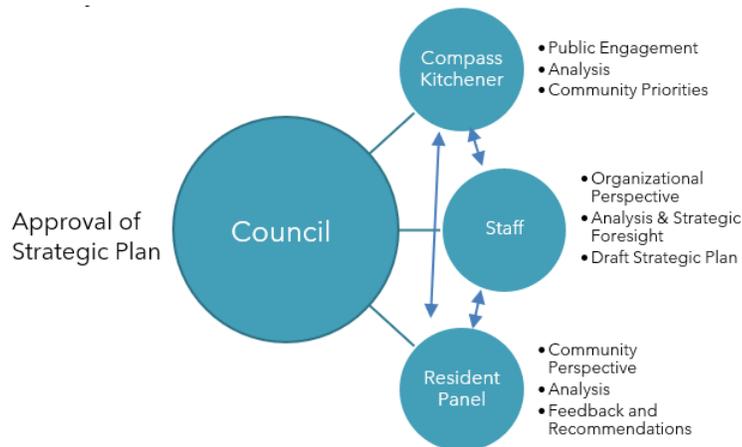
Given the increasing complexities facing the city, Kitchener is innovating new approaches to develop the next Strategic Plan, by working with the REFOCUS team and their Enterprise Evolution approach which combines scientific knowledge and management processes to pursue economic, equity and environmental objectives. A working group of 20+ staff representing all departments and various levels is engaging in a series of progressive sessions with REFOCUS to learn and apply these methods. The staff group is generating ideas, options and making recommendations together with the Corporate Leadership Team to develop a proposed 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Council Leadership

To support Council in its leadership role to oversee and direct development of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, staff have identified several points for discussion and direction in Council strategy sessions throughout the process. Council and staff have already held four meetings in relation to the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan; a summary of Council’s input and direction to date, and how it has shaped the planning process in a meaningful way is summarized in Appendix A.

Strategic Planning Roles and Inputs

The Strategic Planning process includes a variety of inputs from a number of groups outlined in the visual below. Compass Kitchener, Staff and the Resident Panel each contribute different perspectives, functions and develop deliverables for Council's consideration. Key learnings are being shared between the various groups, and all of these inputs are considered by Council in its leadership role to oversee development of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.



As noted in the January report and discussion with Council on Compass Kitchener community priorities, there is a high degree of alignment between inputs and aspirations gathered from the various phases of community engagement completed and still underway – which are reflected in the Strategic Goal Areas featured in this report.

The **Strategic Plan Resident Panel** is a new role and input shown in the diagram. The Panel is an innovation in engagement that staff and Compass Kitchener have brought into this planning cycle, and it was formally launched following in November. The Resident Panel is a group of approximately 40 Kitchener residents who, after responding to a call for volunteers and detailed role description, were randomly chosen to reflect the demographic profile of Kitchener. Designed as an informed, consensus-based, and representative voice of the public, the panel's role and purpose is to:

- Work alongside members of City of Kitchener staff, the Compass Kitchener Advisory Committee and the REFOCUS consulting team.
- Work together collaboratively, to understand facts surrounding key issues/ considerations by reading information, hearing from experts and talking as a group.
- Develop and agree through consensus on recommendations for potential goals and actions to be considered for inclusion in the Strategic Plan.
- Advise staff and Council on the Strategic Goals and Actions that will make up the Strategic Plan by developing recommendations that could include trade-offs or compromises.

The Resident Panel is a method to deeply involve the community in stages of the strategic planning process where typically there has been very little engagement - creating the opportunity for meaningful contributions around goals and actions, while building understanding and trust in the work of the City. Having met twice so far, and with two

sessions to come, the panel has already provided rich and meaningful feedback, which led to staff amending the proposed Strategic Goal Areas to include a distinct Economic focus, reflected in this report.

Strategic Plan Components

The Strategic Plan includes several key components which together reflect the City's aspirations and commitments for Kitchener as outlined in the visual below; we are currently defining Strategic Goal Areas as the focus of this report and Council discussion.



The **Vision** is our 20-year community vision for a desired future of Kitchener and what we as a City organization are striving for on behalf of the community. Within this 20-year timeframe the City establishes a series of Strategic Plans aligned to each term of Council, to make meaningful progress on what is possible to achieve over that 4-year cycle. **Strategic Goal Areas** are focus areas in which the City can take action to make change in themes that are important to the community in the 4-year cycle, and aligned to the Vision. **Actions** outline the specific commitments and progress the City will make within the Goal Areas, often reflected as projects in the annual Business Plan.

Strategic Goal Areas Proposed for 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

The proposed Strategic Goal Areas for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan represent the synthesis of broad community engagement inputs including Compass Kitchener's community priorities. As part of our work in the Enterprise Evolution approach and new to the process in this planning cycle, staff also considered a broader system view of social, environmental, economic and organizational domains in addition to community input, and questions such as:

- What could Kitchener influence as a community to ensure resilience and sustainability into the future?
- What is the current momentum and motivation to make progress in certain areas?
- What value could be generated within each area, including across the community, society and the environment?

Staff developed a list of 21 potential Strategic Goal Areas from community input and the system-wide approach. Through a series of iterative analysis, discussion and prioritization, as well as feedback from the Resident Panel, staff arrived at the following proposed grouping of 5 to guide action and progress over the life of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, with the definitions and potential value of each included in Appendix B:

Note:

Letters refer to items as detailed in Appendix B which were grouped into broader Goal Areas. *Italics* refer to additional items of interest to Council and the community that could be included within the Strategic Goal Area

GOAL #1 – BELONGING AND PARTICIPATION: Enable community and citizen wellbeing and thriving by providing greater access to responsive City programs and services, welcoming and embracing newcomers as a community, and involving and empowering citizens through meaningful engagement with the City.

Includes the following:

- Civic Engagement (A)
- Community Connection and Belonging (B)
- Newcomer Experience (C)
- Healthy and Active Community (E)
- *Reconciliation*

GOAL #2 – HOUSING, LAND USE AND MOBILITY: Plan and provide a built environment that meets the needs of all by improving housing access and affordability, enabling mobility through a variety of transportation modes, and preserving valued green space while growing smartly.

Includes the following:

- Housing (F)
- Transportation (J)
- Sustainable Land Use and Urban Growth (K)
- *Parks, Outdoor Spaces, Trails, Active Transportation, Traffic*

GOAL #3 – ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION: Make transformational efforts towards environmental sustainability and resilience by planning and providing infrastructure and programs to respond to climate change, transitioning toward low-carbon, renewable energy sources, and supporting residents to make sustainable choices.

Includes the following:

- Climate Adaptation & Mitigation (H)
- Energy Mix (I)
- *Tree canopy, Natural systems and areas*

GOAL #4 – ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND OPPORTUNITY: Strengthen the economic ecosystem in Kitchener by way of meaningful engagement between the City and business community, building an environment where a diverse community of businesses and entrepreneurs are connected and well-supported.

Includes the following:

- Employment (D)
- Innovation culture (External) (L)
- Private Sector Health (M)
- Workforce (External) (N)
- Entrepreneurship/Small Business Community Health (O)
- Private Investment in Kitchener (P)

GOAL #5 – GOOD GOVERNMENT: Enhance the core programs and systems which underpin the City organization and workforce by investing in skill enhancement and development, leadership capabilities, employee attraction and retention to build a strong and diverse workforce committed to public service, with the City consistently being regarded as an excellent place to work.

Includes the following:

- Data Management (Q)
- Employer Identity / Value Proposition (R)
- Financial Health (S)
- Organizational & Leadership Capability (T)
- Stakeholder Relationships (U)
- *Innovation culture (internal)*

At Council's February 27 Strategic Session, staff will engage Council in a discussion on proposed Strategic Goal Areas as focal points for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan including the following:

- 1. Have staff accurately summarized Council and Community priorities in these five goal areas?***
- 2. Within these goal areas, where would you like to see particular emphasis placed as we establish term-of-Council priority actions?***

The outcomes of Council's discussion will provide focus for staff to identify proposed actions which the City might undertake in the next 4 years to make progress; these will be shared with Council at a future session for discussion.

Next Steps in the Strategic Planning Process:

- Development of final recommendations for strategic actions informed by Resident Panel, staff and Compass Kitchener (March-April 2023)
- Refinement of draft strategic goals, options, actions through an iterative process with Corporate Leadership Team direction and guidance (March-May 2023)

- Council engagement on new 20-year Vision, prioritizing actions, and receiving Resident Panel report/recommendations (May 2023)
- Final online public survey (EngageKitchener) and targeted engagement on draft strategic goals and actions (May-June 2023)
- Final Council approval of 2023-2026 Strategic Plan content including actions (June 2023)
- Strategic Plan launch and communications (fall 2023)

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the development of the 2023-2026 City of Kitchener Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Operating Budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

CONSULT AND COLLABORATE – This report highlights some of the broad and diverse community engagement underway to support and inform the creation of Kitchener’s 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, including a new 20-year Vision for Kitchener, community priorities, and potential goals and actions for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

CAO-2022-160 [Preparing for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

CAO-2022-198 [Results of Environics 2022 Survey of Kitchener Residents](#)

CAO-2022-413 [Strategic Foresight and Community Engagement Update](#)

CAO-2023-047 [Compass Kitchener Advisory Committee Community Priorities](#)

APPROVED BY: Dan Chapman, CAO

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A - Summary of Council Input into the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan to Date

Appendix B - Potential Strategic Goal Areas Considered for 2023-2026 Strategic Plan